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January 1965
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
RELATING TO NATIONAL SECURITY

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4 January 1964

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

CONTENTS

1. South Vietnam: Khanh appears to have raised price for settlement of political crisis. (Page 1)
2. Congo: Government mercenaries continue to pick up sizable quantities of Communist-manufactured weapons in northeast. (Page 3)
3. Cuba: Castro speech is defiant toward US and asserts regime's autonomy within "socialist camp." (Page 4)
4. USSR - UK: Kosygin appears to be backing away from agreement to visit London before Wilson visits Moscow. (Page 5)
5. Notes: Warsaw Pact; Syria. (Page 6)

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

South Vietnam: [General Khanh appears to have raised his price for settlement of the political crisis in Saigon]

[redacted]

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[redacted] Khanh is now demanding establishment of a new council with strong military representation which presumably would oversee the functioning of the civil government. [redacted]

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[It is not clear how much support Khanh's reported new proposal has among other senior commanders, nor is it certain that Khanh seriously hopes to obtain such a council. [redacted]

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[redacted]

Buddhist leaders meanwhile continue to voice strong opposition to Huong. Monk Tri Quang told Embassy officers on 1 January that he and other Buddhist leaders would be satisfied with nothing less than Huong's replacement as premier, preferably by

(continued)

legal means. Despite Quang's claim that the Buddhist leaders intended to continue a moderate tack in the immediate future, Buddhist strikes and other agitational activity occurred in Hué and other central Vietnam towns over the week end.

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4 Jan 65

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Congo: Government mercenaries continue to pick up sizable quantities of Communist-manufactured weapons in the northeast.

The increasing loss of arms by the rebels may cause their radical African suppliers to choose between stopping the deliveries or sending in effective soldiers to protect their investment.

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Despite frequent reports of the introduction of radical African "volunteers" to fight government mercenaries, none so far has been seen. Rebel tactics are reported to be improving, but they apparently are unable to prevent the mercenaries from moving about with relative ease.

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4 Jan 65

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Cuba: Fidel Castro, in his 2 January speech, was characteristically defiant in his references to the United States, but he went out of his way to assert his regime's autonomy within the "socialist camp."

He restated his interest in living in peace with the US and even in developing trade relations. But he stressed that this is no sign of weakness, and that his regime is strong enough to wait indefinitely for the US to meet his terms.

He said that this may not come about until the US is forced to deal with "several" other revolutionary regimes and that the US must ultimately commit itself not only against intervening in Cuba, but also in "Vietnam, Venezuela, Guatemala, and the Congo."

Castro made no direct reference to US reconnaissance flights, to the US naval base, or to other specific issues between the US and Cuba.

The Cuban leader was more emphatic than ever before in a public speech in asserting his refusal to accept dictation from abroad. "If any (Communist) party were to try that with us," he declared, "it would be met with a decisive and complete rejection." Later on, he chastised Cubans who in his view had come to feel too dependent on foreign assistance. He declared that Cubans must be prepared to go it alone even if "absolutely no help could come to Cuba from abroad."

[redacted]
[redacted] there has been resistance within the Castro regime to Soviet advice aimed at rationalizing Cuban economic institutions. Nevertheless, in his 2 January speech, Castro again reiterated his rejection of any thought of breaking with the "socialist camp."

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4 Jan 65

4

USSR-UK: [Premier Kosygin appears to be backing away from his agreement to visit London before Prime Minister Wilson visits Moscow]

[The Soviet ambassador in London met with Foreign Secretary Gordon Walker on 1 January to press for Wilson's agreement to come to Moscow first. Gordon Walker agreed to raise the question with Wilson, but reiterated the prime minister's preference for a Soviet visit first and pointed out that Wilson had already indicated in Commons that this was the nature of his agreement with the Soviets.]

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[US officials in Moscow give more credence to two other considerations. They believe that the Soviets reopened the question because a Wilson visit to Moscow first would be a "more prestigious arrangement" for the new Soviet Government. They also feel that party first secretary Brezhnev may wish to play a role in the initial talks with a leading Western official, and that this is easier done in Moscow than London.]

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4 Jan 65

5

NOTES

Warsaw Pact: A high-level meeting of the Warsaw Pact will convene in Warsaw on 19 January, according to Rumanian Premier Maurer. His attendance suggests that it will involve the Pact's Political Consultative Committee consisting of bloc party and government leaders. The meeting follows Soviet Premier Kosygin's remarks to the Supreme Soviet on 9 December that Pact members should consult to "safeguard peace in Europe" in the face of plans to create a NATO multilateral force. The European security proposals advanced by Gromyko and Polish Foreign Minister Rapacki last month in the UN General Assembly may be on the agenda.

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Syria: The Syrian Government has followed up its earlier nationalization of banks and major corporations by announcing the nationalization of 107 additional companies. The action is further evidence that the more radical elements have won out in maneuvering within the Baathist regime. Demonstrations against the move may occur which, given the uncertain loyalty of key army units, might be difficult to control.

25X1

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4 Jan 65

6

25X6

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